

MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST

August
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Issue 8



Back to School!

If you have kids, you know August is the last chance for outdoor family adventures before school—and a busy schedule—begins again. For teachers, it's time to prepare for a new year of students.

Education is important in my family. Many of my relatives were teachers, including my mother. I was a science teacher before joining the Conservation Department, and my wife, Janet, taught for many years before becoming the principal at Thorpe J. Gordon Elementary School in Jefferson City. I know how hard teachers and school administrators work for Missouri kids.

Today, “No Child Left Behind” is a mandate under federal law. It emphasizes accountability and assessment of student progress. Our challenge is to help Missouri teachers include conservation concepts within their tight, demanding schedules and to inspire Missouri students, who are increasingly distracted from the natural world, to appreciate the importance of conservation.

The Department of Conservation provides funds, educational materials and training to help teachers and students connect to the outdoors and our fish, forest and wildlife resources.

For example, the Department provides grants for developing outdoor classrooms. We also offer teachers educational “trunks” filled with outdoor teaching tools and periodic informational newsletters. Frequently, teachers will avail themselves of specialized training in a variety of conservation subjects and outdoor activities, often for college credit.

Many other resources are provided free to schools or are available on a free-loan basis, including conservation curriculum packages, posters, videos, computer games, books and the *Missouri Conservationist* magazine's *Outside In* section.

Kids can get directly involved and stay connected to the outdoors either in their classrooms or at Department locations. Training in hunter safety, birding, camping, orienteering, fishing, hunting and other outdoor skills are popular offerings conducted by numerous Conservation Agents and Outdoor Skills Specialists.



Marla Burgess's 4th-grade class at Willow Springs Elementary School created this quilt for the Conservation Commission to show their appreciation for educational materials that helped them learn more about Lewis and Clark.

Kids can even take an independent conservation study course through our Conservation Frontiers program.

The variety of opportunities can be overwhelming. That's why we have Department staff focused on contacting schools and youth leaders. They explain what is available and make recommendations on what might best fit a school's or teachers' needs. To find the Conservation Education Consultant or Outdoor Skills Specialist nearest you, visit our web-site at <www.missouriconservation.org> and click on "Education," or write Education Materials Form, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

Many youngsters have their first contacts with conservation and with the Conservation Department at school. We do everything we can to make those first contacts positive because today's children are tomorrow's conservationists. The future of Missouri's natural resources will be in good hands only if our children value the natural world and practice the wise use of its many gifts.

John D. Hoskins, Director

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I LIKE KITES!

I enjoyed "Roadside Raptors." Last year we had a mated pair of Mississippi kites that made a daily ritual of perching on a dead branch in our oak tree. They were so beautiful to see, and their call is so unique, that we looked forward to watching them soar and dive in our yard all summer long.

This year they are back and have taken up residence in the same tree, but I've seen them harassed by jays as they sit on their perch. It's my understanding that the only reason they may have come into our area was as a result of the West Nile virus kill of the crows and jays in recent years. If this is correct, will my beautiful kites be driven from our area as the crow and jay populations rebound?

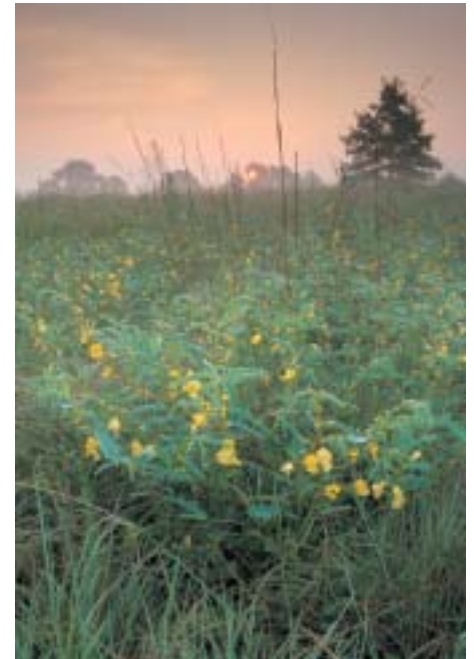
Madonna Lowell, Crestwood

Editor's note: Mississippi kite populations have been expanding even in areas where crows and bluejays are numerous. Crows and bluejay populations in the St. Louis area were hit hard by the mosquito-borne West Nile Virus from 2002 to 2003, to the point that their numbers are now extremely low. Unless affected species develop immunity to the disease, their numbers might not rebound. The disease also affects other bird species. In Missouri, 2004 testing of dead birds for West Nile Virus began May 1. If you should find a dead crow, blue jay, house sparrow, grackle or bird of prey (hawk, owl, eagle) in your yard or neighborhood, call your local city or county health department to report it. They may be interested in picking it up for West Nile Virus testing or in recording the locations of where dead birds are found.



FEEDING TIME

Greg Jarboe of Hannibal monitored a robin's nest just four feet from his front window. The mother robin first laid one egg, but heavy winds blew it from the nest. She then laid three more, two of which hatched. He snapped this photo of the mother robin feeding a berry to her babies. The young robins flew from the nest about 15 days after hatching.



PHOTOGRAPHER CREDITED

The photograph of a sand prairie on page 20 of the June issue of the *Conservationist* was taken by Casey Galvin of Bloomington, Illinois.

SERPENT STOCKING

Look in the July issue of the *Conservationist* on page 10 upper left corner.

It appears to me that we have our very own Loch Ness Monster here in Missouri.

Louis Byford, Rock Port

Editor's note: According to photographer, Jim Rathert, the picture shows a twisted cottonwood in the pose of a serpent. He's pretty sure it wasn't a serpent posing as a twisted cottonwood.

AMAZED

Just wanted to let you know how absolutely wonderful we think your magazine is! I have never been to your website before but rushed here to renew my *Conservationist* subscription, as I don't know what we'd do without the truly great writing, beautiful photos, valuable and entertaining information, and lots more.

Our whole family enjoys the magazine. I am not from Missouri and have

lived in several other states, but nowhere else did we receive—much less free-of-charge—anything remotely like your magazine. It's the finest example of my "tax dollars at work" I've ever seen!

Tracie Noel, Lake St. Louis,

LAKE RELOCATED

Just thought I'd remind you that Mark Twain Lake isn't a northwestern Missouri reservoir, as stated in the contents page of your June issue, but rather a northeastern one.

Tom Winter, Kansas City

LOVE THOSE BRITTANIES!

I did enjoy your article on hunting dogs

but I must take exception to some of your statements on the Brittany.

The Brittany is a most exceptional breed of dog. Most Brittannies have an excellent nose and will almost always hunt. The exception being when they have not been trained or handled properly.

It is one of the sporting dogs that also make an excellent companion and house dog when not in the field. One of the best kept secrets of the Brittany is how wonderful they are as house pets. Many of our National Champions, Field Champions and Dual Champions spend the off-season sleeping on the beds of their owners and playing with their children.

Marvin and Mary, via Internet

The letters printed here reflect readers' opinions about the Conservationist and its contents. Space limitations prevent us from printing all letters, but we welcome signed comments from our readers. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Ask the Ombudsman



Q: Do fox and grey squirrels crossbreed? What do they eat? I saw one around our bluebird house, acting like it was trying to get the baby birds. I've also heard that old male squirrels will castrate the young ones. Is this true?

A: Some color variations might give the appearance of crossbreeding, but fox squirrels and gray squirrels are two different species. In the unlikely event they did crossbreed, the offspring would be sterile.

Squirrels mainly eat vegetation, but they eat birds' eggs, nestlings, etc. Several years ago, when we had the major cicada hatch, I watched a fox squirrel eat a number of cicadas. Not too long ago several of us in this office watched a gray squirrel eat the insides out of a song bird that had struck a window and died.

Our squirrel biologist tells us that the young-of-the-year males' testes are internal and don't descend until the animal reaches sexual maturity. The castration story probably got its start from early-season hunters who didn't notice the organs in the body cavity of young males and erroneously concluded that they had been castrated.

For more information about squirrels, search the web using the key words *Sciurus niger* or *Sciurus carolinensis* or go to <<http://mdc.mo.gov/nathis/mammals/squirrel/>>. For information on nuisance or problem squirrels go to <www.mdc.mo.gov/landown/wild/nuisance/squirrel/>.

Ombudsman Ken Drenon will respond to your questions, suggestions or complaints concerning Conservation Department programs. Write him at P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, call him at 573/522-4115, ext. 3848, or e-mail him at <Ken.drenon@mdc.mo.gov>.

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Bobwhite Quail Myths

Studies show that quail flourish when provided with good habitat. By Bill White, photos by Jim Rathert

Don Willis of St. Joseph, a landowner in Andrew County, once believed that the major reason quail numbers were declining on his property was predators. He changed his mind when he attended a quail management workshop and learned that others were dramatically improving quail numbers by improving quail habitat on their farms.

Encouraged by their success stories, Willis started burning and light disking and installing food plots.

"I was disking after a burn one evening, and before I left the field, I had pheasants scratching around in the disked area. The next evening I had a covey of quail dusting in the same area. That made a believer out of me," Willis said.



Quail require shrubs, open ground cover and a diversity of plants. If one of these requirements is missing, you'll have fewer quail.

In a few months, Willis increased his quail population from two coveys to five coveys on just 100 acres.

"I had a better hunt on my own farm one day last fall than I did in a three-day Kansas hunt," Willis said.

One of the most common beliefs is that predators are eating all the quail. As Willis discovered, the main reason quail populations have declined is a lack of proper habitat. A survey of landowners at a quail field day showed that 60 percent of the participants were managing their land for quail. Not surprising, those same 60 percent were seeing more quail on their property.

It's hard to convince many landowners that their farms have changed dramatically over the last 20, 30 or even 50 years. They insist their property is the same as it always was and that the quail decline must be due to an increase in predators.

On the farm where I grew up 30 years ago, the fencelines were weedy, and the hedgerows had very little grass growing underneath. When a tree fell, weeds would spring up, and you could count on finding a covey close by while hunting.

Today, those same fencelines and hedgerows are choked

with brome and fescue. Weeds don't have a chance in the mat of grass. Of course, you won't find quail there anymore.

To show that things are not the same down on the

farm as they were, I examined aerial photos from the 1970s and compared them to present-day photos. Each time saw huge increases in the amount of tree cover in fencelines and drainages. A full canopy of trees now covers

areas that once had scattered trees. That's good for deer and turkey, but not so good for quail. If you look at most fencelines and draws, you'll discover that most trees are less than 30 years old.

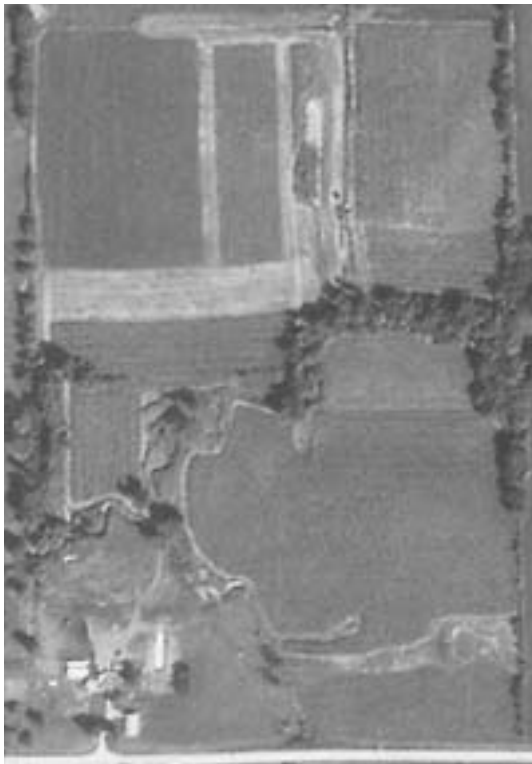
Wooded fencelines and draws not only crowd out quail-friendly shrubs and weeds, but they also provide an advantage for quail predators. A Florida study showed that certain snakes concentrate on quail nests closest to wooded areas. A Mississippi study found that quail near trees were most susceptible to avian predators like great horned owls and Cooper's hawks. The invasion of trees into quail habitat also has provided additional food sources and dens to such predators as raccoons, opossums, and skunks.

But are predators really the reason for the record-low numbers of quail?

Research from North Carolina shows that predator control alone has little effect on quail populations. However, the same study shows that quail numbers triple when habitat is managed in a quail-friendly manner. Several food-habit studies of mid-size predators, including bobcats and coyotes, indicate that these animals eat more raccoons and opossums than they eat quail. Their eating habits might actually benefit quail.

Quail are well adapted to deal with predators. Their habit of roosting in a circle, with each bird

On my farm, I have increased my quail population by 600 percent through annual management activities. I have eight coveys on 60 acres.



Aerial photos of the same property taken in the 1970s and recently show large increases in the amount of tree cover in fencelines. That's not good for quail.

facing outward, helps keep the birds warm in winter, but it also helps ensure that most of the covey will escape if danger threatens. Males may incubate or care for the broods while the hen re-nests. Quail chicks instinctively freeze and melt into the vegetation when predators approach.

Quail can co-exist with predators, but they cannot overcome the loss of their habitat to trees and brome or fescue. They need shrubs, open ground and a diversity of plants. Without those elements, you won't have quail.

By managing quail habitat, you can make it a harder for predators to find quail. We can take the fencelines and draws that are choked with brome or fescue and turn them into areas with weeds, legumes and quail-friendly grasses. We can convert tree-choked fencelines and draws back to the weedy, shrubby habitat that quail require.

Brome and fescue are great for erosion control and some pasture applications, but the unintended spread of these grasses into fencelines, under shrub thickets and under hedgerows has harmed quail populations. Several herbicides are available to help convert these grasses to better wildlife cover. Prescribed burning three or more years in a row, if enough fuel is present, will produce similar results.

Trees are beneficial on many landscapes, but the invasion of trees into former quail habitat has had some unintended bad consequences for quail. Trees have crowded out shrubs and weeds, further damaging the quality of quail habitat.

Wooded fencelines and draws can be restored for quail by dropping the trees with a chainsaw. Using a bulldozer is not recommended. Stumps of undesirable trees should be treated to prevent resprouting. Leave valuable lumber and wildlife food trees uncut. If you do cut them, their stumps can be left untreated. Weeds and the shrubs should come back in a very short time. If brome or fescue is present under these trees, those grasses should be eliminated.

There also is a widespread belief that turkeys eat or kill quail. No known study of quail or turkey in the past 60 years has turned up evidence of a quail being eaten by a turkey. Biologists examine turkey crops throughout the year, study radio-collared quail



To be useful to quail, fencelines need shrubby, low-growing cover.

and monitor quail nests with video cameras. If turkeys kill or harass quail, surely some hard evidence would have turned up by now. It hasn't.

Of course, there are always rumors of someone knowing someone else who shot a turkey with a crop full of quail chicks, but nobody directly knows the person or people who claim these things.

The long-term increases in turkey and deer populations are not the cause for the decline in quail. They do, however, indicate the reason for the decline. More tree cover on the landscape is helpful to deer and turkey, but detrimental to quail. If you want more quail, you need more shrubs and weeds.

On my farm, I have increased my quail population by 600 percent through annual management activities. I have eight coveys on 60 acres. The most dramatic results came along one 600-foot fencerow, where I knocked down all trees younger than 30 years old. I also sprayed a 30-foot swath through the brome and fescue. That summer, I had an estimated 60 to 70 quail chicks brooding in that fencerow.

We can convert tree-choked fencelines and draws back to the weedy, shrubby habitat that quail require.

A free quarterly newsletter, "The Covey Headquarters," can help you find out more about restoring quail on your land. This newsletter brings the latest in quail research and habitat man-

agement success stories to you. To subscribe, write to The Covey Headquarters Newsletter, 3915 Oakland Ave, St. Joseph, MO 64506 or email <Bill.White@mdc.mo.gov>. ▲



© DAVID BESENGER

The Measure of SUCCESS

Since the birth of my son Ryan, I have dreamed of the two of us hunting together. I started tutoring Ryan on safe shooting skills once he reached his eighth birthday. Ryan quickly developed good shooting skills practicing with a lever-action, .22-caliber rifle with open sights.

Once he became proficient with that rifle, I allowed Ryan to shoot a scoped, .243-caliber, bolt-action rifle. The rifle is a Ruger Model 77 and was the first bolt-action rifle that I had purchased on my own. Now it is Ryan's first deer rifle.

Ryan could operate and shoot that heavier gun, but he needed sandbags or shooting sticks to support the forearm of the rifle. Ryan enjoyed shooting, and in the summer of 2003, he began begging me to take him deer hunting during the upcoming 2003 Youth Firearms Deer Season. I agreed.

The night before the two-day season opened, I recognized the enthusiasm and excitement in my son that I had many times experienced. It reminded me of my childhood when I would lay out all my hunting clothes the night before a quail hunt with my father. I never got a good night's sleep before any of those hunts.

When my alarm sounded, I went to Ryan's room to wake him. I had barely turned the doorknob when I heard him ask, "Is it time to go, Dad?"

As we donned our hunting clothes, I told Ryan how dressing in layers would keep him warm. I went to the kitchen and began to make a pot of coffee.

"Dad, can you make me a cup of coffee?" he asked.

"Don't you mean a cup of hot chocolate?" I replied.

Ryan nodded. I guessed he just wanted to do what his dad does.

It was a long drive to the property on which I had received permission to take Ryan hunting. He sat silently, drinking his hot chocolate. I couldn't

When father
and son go
hunting
together,
they never
come home
empty-handed.

By Jason M. Dickey
Illustrations by David Besenger



help but think about what must have been running through his mind. He was probably picturing the same hatrack bucks that I was seeing. Hunting together reduces the age difference between men and their sons.

We arrived at the property well before daylight and began walking, but heavy rain forced us to seek shelter in one of the landowner's outbuildings. The rain broke at daybreak, and we continued on to our hunting spot. On the way, I told him the proper ways to carry a firearm.

I also showed Ryan how to maneuver through the woods and explained to him the importance of wind direction and how to recognize the various signs that animals leave. I told him to that the best way to see deer was to look for horizontal lines in the mostly vertical woodland.

Occasionally we heard the calls of wild turkeys and pileated woodpeckers, the chatter of squirrels and the wingbeats of waterfowl as they passed over the forest canopy on their way to the nearby Niangua River. Ryan asked about them all, and I answered him as well as I could.

After we sat for a while without seeing any deer, I took Ryan to another part of the property. We were looking for a place to sit down when I noticed movement to my right. I told Ryan to stand still and to be absolutely quiet. Like a ghost, a nice-antlered buck walked toward us. The wind was in our favor. I slowly positioned the shooting sticks I carried to help Ryan support his rifle.

I told Ryan to shoulder his weapon and to load it like we had practiced. Light rain began to fall. The deer moved closer. It was traveling a draw, which would provide a perfectly safe backstop for a shot. I encouraged Ryan to place the crosshairs just behind the deer's shoulder, switch the safety off and squeeze the trigger when he had clear shot.

The deer was now within 50 yards. It was an exceptional 8-pointer, a bigger deer than I had ever taken with a rifle.

Ryan continued to aim. Whispering, I asked Ryan if he could see the deer in his scope. He said he could, but

that he was nervous and that the deer kept moving. Ryan attempted the breathing exercises that we had practiced for shooting, but I noticed that his breathing was short and excited. I could only imagine the amount of adrenaline rushing through his small body!

The deer continued to move slowly away from us. I whistled, and the deer froze, presenting himself mostly broadside. He looked in our direction and began stomping his front feet. Just as I whispered to Ryan that the deer wouldn't stay around long and that he would have to shoot soon, the deer turned and bounded away, his big, white tail waving until he was out of sight.

I asked Ryan why he didn't shoot. A tear began to well up in his eye. He told me he didn't feel comfortable with his aim and that he was afraid his shot would not cleanly kill the deer.

"I'm sorry, Dad," he said.

I reassured Ryan that he had done the right thing and that he had no reason to be sorry. He had made a conscious decision not to take a shot because he didn't feel ready for it. I told him I was very proud of his decision because it showed respect for the game he pursued.

We continued our hunt and saw more deer, but we didn't get another chance to shoot. Later, a small 6-pointer walked up on us. He was very curious and put on a good show. We opted to let this small buck grow and discussed the importance of harvesting does to help balance and stabilize the deer population.

Ryan continued to talk about the big buck and how he wished that he could have taken the shot. I tried to convince him that he had made the right decision and that he would have many more days of deer hunting. I explained that, with more shooting practice, he would gain more confidence in his marksmanship. He thanked me for taking him deer hunting and told me that he was really having a good time.

The day had provided a wonderful experience for my son and me. I wished that Ryan could have taken the



He had shown respect for wildlife by letting the deer pass to wait for another opportunity when he would be ready to make his shot count.



buck, but Ryan had shown a surprising amount of maturity for his age. Being a Conservation Agent, I know that lots of adult hunters would shoot at a moving deer without giving any thought to the possibility of injuring the deer and never recovering it.

The Youth Hunting seasons were introduced by the Department of Conservation to help introduce kids to hunting. They provide an opportunity for adults to spend quality time with kids and to teach them how to make good decisions when it comes to taking wildlife.

Ryan probably experienced a kind of buck fever, but he didn't let it cloud his judgement. He had shown respect for wildlife by letting the deer pass to wait for another opportunity when he would be ready to make his shot count. I was proud of the decision Ryan had

made and feel confident that he is well on his way to becoming a responsible and ethical hunter.

Ryan and I have gone camping, canoeing, fishing, shooting and hunting squirrels, but the time we spent together during the 2003 Youth Firearms Deer Season was one of our most successful outings.

I couldn't have imagined the measure of success of our hunt together that day. We spent quality time together. We strengthened the bond between a father and his son. We enjoyed the blessings of the many natural resource treasures that Missouri has to offer, and we learned more about each other. We didn't obtain venison for the freezer or antlers to hang on the wall, but we did come home with a good feeling of why we hunt. We were successful beyond measure. ▲

Sharpen your skills with Squirrels



Hunting squirrels teaches you patience and marksmanship. After your lessons, you can pan-fry your homework.

Hunting bushytails will teach you all you need to know for deer hunting.

by Mark Goodwin, photos by Cliff White

Squirrels have sparked the hunting spirit of many young hunters. Interest in squirrel hunting, however, often wanes as hunters grow older. Bigger game, such as white-tailed deer, takes center stage.

Nevertheless, squirrel hunting can be just as exciting as ever, and it's a superb way to sharpen your deer-hunting skills.

Building Patience

The amount of waiting inherent in hunting white-tailed deer demands more patience than most people have. Our culture demands immediate satisfaction. When we want something, we expect to get it right away. This attitude runs counter to nature's pace and to the mindset needed to successfully hunt whitetails.

Developing patience requires practice, and a great time to practice is while squirrel hunting.

Squirrels are abundant in Missouri. The squirrel season is long, and limits are liberal. Any tract of timber larger than 10 acres with mature, nut-producing trees will usually contain lots of squirrels. Good squirrel hunting is easy to find, and it's an excellent way to escape the "have-it-now" tempo of the modern world.

Squirrel hunting, requires that you slip back into nature's pace. You may have to wait an hour or so for a squirrel to re-emerge after ducking



into a den tree. You may have to stand in one place and look skyward for 15 minutes. You'll find that you have to travel through the woods in discreet, five-step increments. The patience that you acquire in squirrel hunting will make you a better and more successful deer hunter.

Shooting Skills

For any hunter, the rifle range is a fine place to practice marksmanship. However, few deer or squirrels are taken by hunters shooting at marked distances from a bench rest in full sun. At the range and in the woods, proper breathing, trigger control and follow through are the same, but that's about it. Deer hunters face an array of shot angles from a variety of shooting positions under varying light conditions. To further complicate matters, shots must often be made within a narrow window of opportunity.

Squirrel hunting provides frequent shooting practice under the same conditions you'll face when deer hunting. To fine-tune your marksmanship for deer season, hunt squirrels with a .22-caliber rifle similar to the design of your deer rifle, and use the same type of sights that you use while deer hunting. If you hunt deer with a muzzle-loading rifle, squirrel hunting is even more helpful.

Muzzle-loading rifles, from flintlocks to in-lines, are



Woods-wise squirrels can be as challenging to hunt as deer.

highly reliable and accurate. Level of reliability and accuracy, however, is determined by proper handling. All muzzleloaders, for example, require meticulous cleaning to be functional. Breech and bores must be left dry and oil free. Powder must be kept dry.

With caplock muzzleloaders, percussion caps must fit tight and snug to the nipple.

With flintlocks, flints must be sharp, properly positioned and tight in the jaws of the cock. The touch hole must be



Hunting squirrels with archery equipment requires both expert marksmanship and woodsmanship.



Use the squirrel season to scout for deer sign and learn more about the woods you'll hunt.

clear, with a proper quantity of powder in the pan.

Any hunter new to muzzleloading will experience a few misfires before learning to fully control these variables. It's far better to have a misfire on a squirrel hunt than to have a misfire on a deer. Hunting squirrels with a muzzleloader also allows a hunter to learn how to use and organize loading equipment while hunting.

Many deer hunters don't know that the muzzle-loading rifle they use for deer can also be used to hunt squirrels. Simply reduce the powder charge and shoot only at the head.

Bowhunters who hunt whitetails can enhance their deer-hunting skills by bowhunting for squirrels. Try it. You'll quickly be convinced.

September, when nuts are falling and squirrels are foraging for them on the ground, is the best month to bowhunt for squirrels. Climb in your deer stand and wait. Squirrels that feed on the ground within 15 yards or

closer to your position allow you to practice shooting downward as you would from a tree stand. This will also give you excellent practice shooting at really close ranges. Such shots are trickier than they appear.

When bow hunting for squirrels, use judo points and aim for the squirrel's head. To be sure, bow hunting for squirrels is not about bringing home a limit. Bagging a squirrel or two with a bow represents a great hunt. Over the course of several hunts, you will likely get enough squirrels for a meal or two. Come October, the shooting practice you logged will increase your odds of bagging a deer.

Scouting

Successful deer hunting involves knowing where deer tend to be at a given time, and knowing which way they travel to get there. This requires scouting. Scouting is simple in concept. Find where deer feed and bed, then find a way to set up, undetected, between those two areas.



Bowhunting squirrels from a tree stand allows you to practice shots similar to those you might have during deer season.

Squirrel hunting allows you to do just that. When hunting for bushytails, look for deer sign, particularly in September, when deer are establishing routines that will carry into deer season.

Some deer hunters might question this advice, believing that human presence and gunfire will cause deer to leave an area or change their habits. It is probably wise not to hunt squirrels where you plan to deer hunt during the couple of weeks immediately before deer season, but before then you can learn a lot about where deer are feeding and bedding.

Maximum Effort

Hunting white-tailed deer represents different things to different people. For some, hunting whitetails is mostly a social activity. It's about getting together with good buddies for a weekend or for evenings filled with good food and time around the campfire. The actual hunting is secondary to getting away for a while with friends.

For others, hunting is the main focus. They like the challenge, and they spend many hours in the woods and expend maximum effort on their deer hunting. If you take your deer hunting seriously, then squirrel hunting is a great way to hone your skills. Try it. Come deer season, your skills will be noticeably sharper. ▲

Fine Food

Besides sharpening deer-hunting skills and being fun, squirrel hunting offers fine table fare. Young squirrels are delicious when fried.

To prepare a young squirrel for frying, skin it, then remove its entrails. Be careful not to puncture its stomach, intestines or bladder. Cut off its front and hind legs and the back meat.

Remove the yellow-gray glands located where the front legs join the body, and the glands located under the triangle-shaped patch of tissue on the hind legs, where thigh meets knee. Soak squirrel pieces in milk, then roll them in flour flavored with a liberal amount of seasoned salt and black pepper.

Heat about a half-inch of oil in a skillet to 350 degrees. Brown squirrels on one side for about five minutes, then carefully turn squirrel pieces over and reduce the heat to 275 degrees. Cook another 10 to 15 minutes. "Crisp up" the squirrel pieces by returning the heat to 350 degrees for the last few minutes of cooking. Remove squirrel pieces and place them on paper towels that will absorb excess oil. If the towels become oil-soaked and no longer absorbent, place the pieces on a second set of clean towels. This will help keep them crisp.

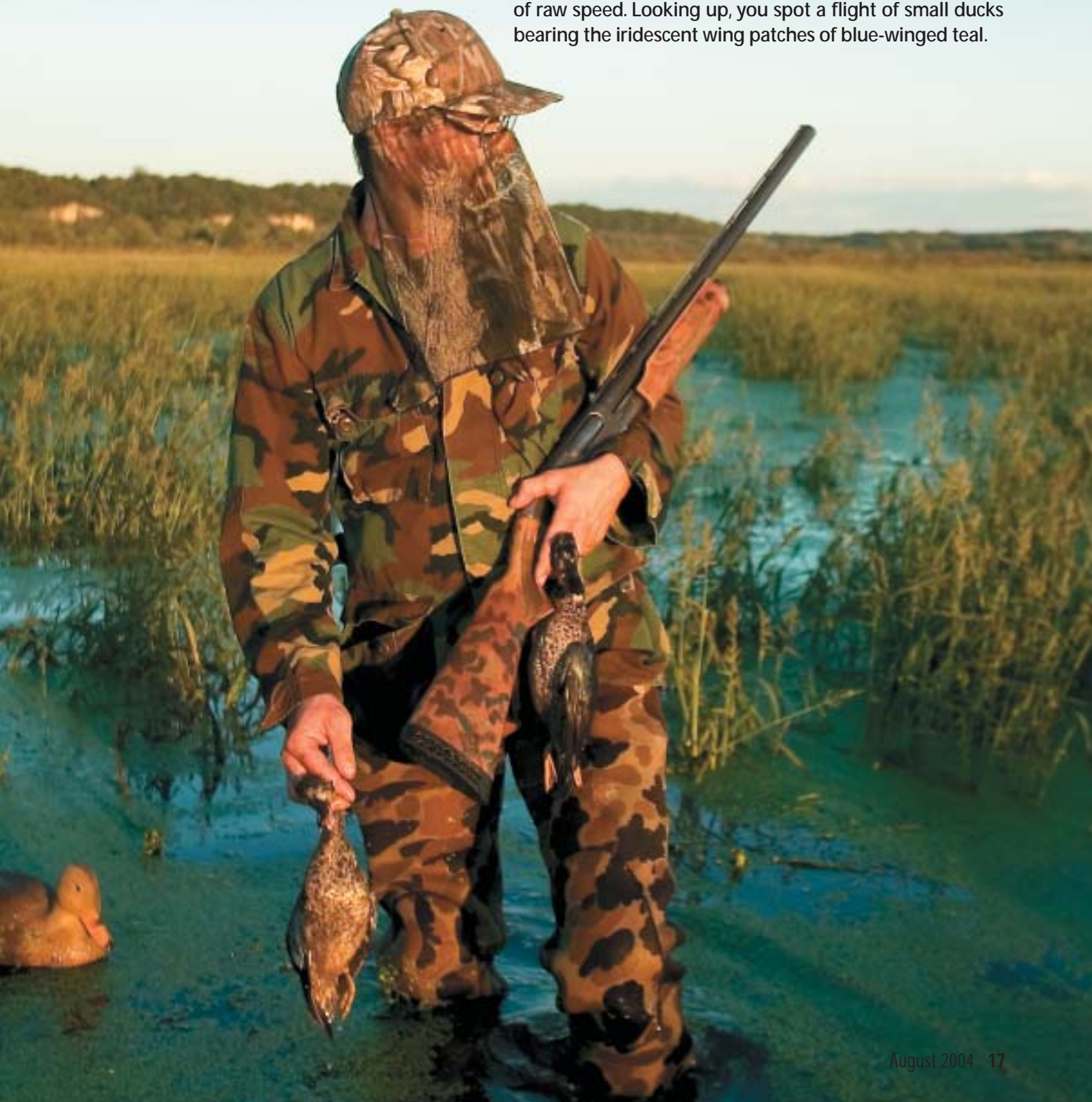
Try serving the squirrel meat with biscuits, fresh tomatoes, homegrown green beans and new potatoes. For dessert, pecan pie is hard to beat.

Teal Hunting

Warm up to duck hunting during the early teal season.

by John A. Johnson, photos by Cliff White

You watch the skies with anticipation as the sun peeks over the horizon. The air is silent until you hear what sounds like a glider passing only inches over your head. The air fairly sizzles with the sound of raw speed. Looking up, you spot a flight of small ducks bearing the iridescent wing patches of blue-winged teal.



The soul-stirring sound of these winged rockets is one that many dedicated duck hunters never hear. That's because teal hunting usually occurs very early in the fall. It is so different in many respects from later season hunting that many waterfowlers simply aren't geared for it mentally. It seems so out of place to don lightweight, green-colored camo and to wear mosquito repellent for a duck hunt. It seems more like dove hunting than waterfowling.

Teal provide a great way for duck hunters to get motivated for the main portion of duck season. It's also a lot cheaper to hunt the early teal season than it is to hunt ducks in cold weather. It requires less gear, and hunting areas are usually easier to reach. As a bonus, skill with a duck call is less crucial with teal than with mallards, gadwalls, pintails and other fall ducks.

Your Teal Hunting Outfit

Basic teal hunting gear starts with lightweight waders or hip boots. The ones you use for fishing during the spring and summer will suffice. Any dark color pants will work, since they will be mostly covered by waders or boots. Because you'll be hiding in green foliage, wear a dark green or camouflage shirt or jacket that blends with green leaves or mud.

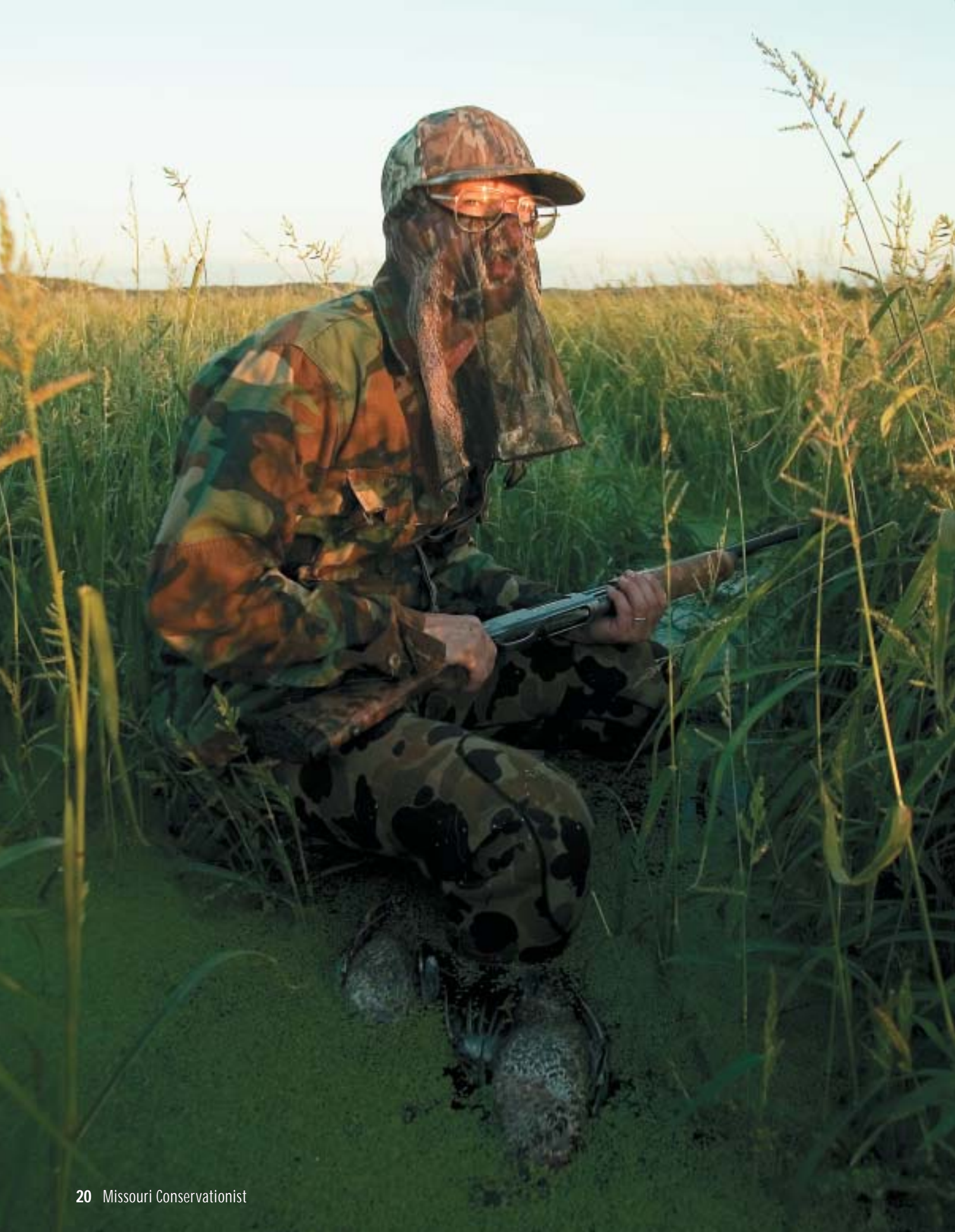
I prefer a shirt heavy enough to thwart pesky mosquitoes because I can tolerate heat more than being bitten by insects. A mosquito head net is inexpensive, yet priceless. It protects your neck and face from gnats and mosquitoes, and camouflages your face. Top off your outfit with a dark camo cap and hat, and you are ready to hunt teal.



A small spread of decoys will lure teal in. Be prepared for fast action. Teal fly faster than most other ducks.







Teal Equipment

A spread of only 12 to 15 mallard hen decoys makes a suitable spread for teal. Know the depth of the water you will be hunting over, and rig the weights accordingly. Normally 2 to 3 feet is plenty of string for teal decoys. It's better to be too long than too short when it comes to rigging weight strings.

Calling can be helpful at times, but it's usually not necessary. With a mallard hen call, you can use a feeding gabble, soft quacks or an occasional five-note "lonesome hen" call. You can also use a high-pitched waterfowl whistle, available at most stores that sell waterfowl hunting supplies, to attract our blue-patched friends. The whistle, like the duck call, requires a little practice. You can also buy special teal calls. The pattern sounds like a long, high-pitched quack, followed by three short quacks. As a rule, silence is much better than making the wrong sounds on a call or whistle.

Almost any shotgun will work for teal. The most popular gauges are 12 and 20. With some of the new non-toxic options available, a 16-gauge is also effective for waterfowl. A pump, semi-automatic or double-barrel shotgun will net you more birds than a single-shot model.

You must use only federally approved, non-toxic shot. Steel is the most popular and least expensive option. Hevi-Shot and Bismuth are also legal. Lots of hunters use 2 3/4-inch, 3-inch, or 3 1/2-inch inch ammunition loaded with No. 4 steel shot. Teal flit, dart and dive at tremendous speeds. Practice shooting at clay targets before hunting to sharpen your skills.

Setting Up

The most important factor in teal hunting is selecting the proper location. If you have no experience in waterfowl hunting, join someone who does. If you can't find anyone who hunts that will share information with you, contact any of the waterfowl hunting guide services on the internet, and consider hiring someone to take you out for the first few times.

Teal hunting is allowed at most conservation areas that contain suitable duck habitat. Conservation agents and area managers are happy to share information about hunting opportunities and can usually provide tips that will greatly enhance your success.

Even if you are able to find a mentor to guide you, it pays to study any information you can find about teal. Learn their behavior patterns,

life cycle, food sources and feeding habits. The more you know and understand about teal, the better your chances of putting together a successful hunt.

Teal Lifestyles

For feeding, teal prefer still or slow moving water, only a few inches deep. They like receding sloughs or drying waterholes that have exposed mud banks and flats. They feed on small crustaceans and insects along the waterline. The birds usually need a flyway to the site. Migrating teal follow rivers and watersheds throughout the Midwest every fall. They also take "side roads," flying up tributaries to find cutoffs and sloughs that fit their needs.

Because decoy spreads are smaller and the necessary clothing is more affordable, teal hunting is a great way for newcomers to discover the sport of duck hunting. It also serves as a good "warm-up" for seasoned waterfowlers.

Best of all, it's fun. ▲



When teal hunting, go light on clothing, calls and decoys and heavy on mosquito protection.



A wide-angle photograph of a river at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow, with soft clouds. The river's surface is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky. In the middle ground, there's a small, dark island or sandbar. The far bank is lined with trees, their silhouettes visible against the horizon. The overall mood is peaceful and scenic.

Enjoy THE *Scenic* Missouri

When you're on "river time," stress just floats away.

by Robert A. Vaughn, photos by Jim Rathert

Usually, the Missouri River stays within its banks, but when it doesn't, it's deadly. Headlines from 1937, 1947, 1951, 1952, 1984 and 1993 describe the devastation that occurs when the Mighty Missouri floods.

To be fair, this powerful waterway also deserves some credit for many days, weeks, months and even years when it's better characterized as a calm, peaceful, tranquil, inviting and entertaining place to be. These qualities make the mighty Missouri one of the most alluring rivers in the Midwest.

I've logged more than 700 miles floating this magnificent river. In July 2000, for example, my son-in-law and I floated on a 20-foot pontoon boat from Sioux City, Iowa, to Kansas City. In September 2002, I floated from Sugar Creek to St. Charles in a 17-foot fishing boat.

From those two endeavors and a few weekend trips, I have learned that there is no best way to float the river. The method of travel is merely a means to an end. Simply being there makes it memorable.

On the 2002 trip down the lower Missouri River, I

planned to spend 13 days floating 325 miles. For my "raft," I selected a 17-foot aluminum fishing boat equipped with an all-weather top. I christened her the *Gray Eagle*. Her top was made of metal, but she was configured more like a prairie schooner than a fishing craft.

The design was quite comfortable. Across the back was a bed frame that contained my sleeping bag. Inside the canopy and attached to the top were fishing rod holders and storage racks. Along the interior walls were hooks for clothes, switches that controlled the running lights, and racks for my maps.

The floor compartment held a single-burner gas stove and other cooking utensils. I carried enough canned, non-perishable food to last 14 days. I carried enough water to consume one gallon every 24 hours.

While planning my adventure, I contacted the U.S.



Army Corps of Engineers and requested a set of Missouri River Navigation charts. These charts show the course of the river and the location of mile markers that show the distance upstream from the mouth at St. Louis. The charts also show the locations of various public recreational facilities.

I also carried a copy of the boating regulations from the U.S. Coast Guard. I made sure the boat met all the requirements for lights, horns, flotation devices, fire extinguishers and safety ropes. I also packed a first-aid kit and mosquito repel-

lent. The marine radio kept me informed of the weather, and to the presence of other river traffic. My cellular phone kept me in touch with home and would provide emergency communication, if needed.

I left L.A. Benite Park's boat ramp at Sugar Creek on Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 10 a.m. Even though it was a cloudy, drizzly morning, my spirits were bright and optimistic. I was happy to be on the river again.

Before you start a float trip, you must prepare yourself mentally for the slow speed you will be traveling. River time dictates the pace



Mark Rathel

I heard wind blowing through the tall trees along the riverbanks and high on the bluffs. Bird songs filled the air.





If you love the outdoors and unhurried serenity, you will appreciate a slow float down the Missouri River.

of life for as long as you're under the river's power. Abandon thoughts of the Interstate, with its fast traffic and stressful environment. Don't think about clocks, schedules or obligations. Just relax and enjoy the ride.

As you drift along, the first thing you notice is the absence of man-made noises. Those noises are replaced with nature's sounds. I heard the current gurgling over the end of a partially submerged log and the splashing sounds of turtles as they tumbled into the water. I heard wind blowing through the tall trees along the riverbanks and high on the bluffs. Bird songs filled the air. I listened to the raspy cries of locusts, which sang as if they knew summer had passed and fall was upon them.

The first two days were cool, with a light, misty rain. Temperatures were in the low 60s. The water was warmer than the air, producing a fog that hovered above the river. It was still raining the morning of the third day, but by noon the sky was clearing.

As I floated through Bakers Bend and into Cranberry Bend, the sun began to burn through the clouds, casting long shadows across the water. The temperature rose to 75 degrees.

The day passed quickly as I enjoyed the scenery. About 5 p.m., I slid the bow of the boat onto a firm, clean sandbar at mile marker 257.5. After a light supper, I fished from the bank and caught several small channel catfish. After cleaning the fish and putting the fillets on ice, I retired to the shelter of the *Gray Eagle* for the night.

As I stretched out in my sleeping bag, I heard the mournful howls of coyotes back in the hills. From somewhere downriver I heard the sounds of a screech owl mixed with the shrieks of the blue heron.

During the night, I was awakened by the throbbing hum of a towboat, its powerful diesel engines pushing several sets of barges upstream. Its floodlights lit up the river and illuminated the shore. The lights glistened off the heavy dew that had fallen on my boat. The boat and its din passed quickly. Nature's symphony reclaimed the stage and serenaded me back to sleep.



Mark Reinert

The days and nights raced all too quickly as I enjoyed the serenity of floating. I also had plenty of chances to chat with local fishermen, admire the restoration of historical riverfront towns, talk with the proprietors of riverside businesses, and take pleasure in the ever-changing scenery.

I spent the last night at Blanchette Landing in St.

Charles. I arrived at about 4 p.m., but the truck and trailer for my return trip home wouldn't arrive until the next morning. I didn't mind. It just gave me more time to visit with the people who were loading and unloading at the ramp.

As evening fell over the river and the traffic slowed, I joined a fisherman on the nearby riprap bank. He was tall and thin, with long gray hair tied in a ponytail. He looked as if he might be in his 50s. He wore blue jeans but no shirt. He was fishing with a heavy surf rod and reel, casting his bait out in the current and letting it drift downstream.

While he fished, he told me a story about his uncle who once owned a fishing camp downriver. The camp was somewhere in the Cul De Sac Bend. He regaled me with many fascinating stories, including tales of huge catfish that were caught and sold on the river. After he gathered up his stringer of channel cats and his fishing gear, he bid me good luck and farewell with a friendly smile.

Alone again on the river, I returned to the *Gray Eagle*, where I spent the rest of the evening listening to the night sounds and allowing my mind to wander over the experiences of the last 12 days and nights. I never regretted a single hour of my float trips down the scenic Missouri.

If you love the outdoors and unhurried serenity, you will appreciate a slow float down the Missouri River. A float trip may be as simple as one person in a canoe, or you can join a flotilla of boats floating for weeks and covering hundreds of miles.

However you go, I guarantee that you will log lifetime memories while camping on clean and inviting sandbars, preparing your evening meals by firelight and watching the moon rise over the river as you sit with fishing tackle in hand. These experiences are there for everyone. ▲



BURN LATER FOR HEALTHIER PRAIRIES

Landowners who burn grasslands in the spring see dramatic improvement in warm season grass stands. Often, however, they also notice a decrease in the vigor of wildflowers, such as coneflower, black-eyed Susan, compass plant and blazing star. This is because spring burns favor grasses at the expense of broad-leaved plants, collectively known as “forbs.”

The solution is burning in late summer or fall. Burning late in the growing season favors forbs over grasses. In fact, making fall burns part of your long-term grassland management improves wildlife habitat by ensuring that warm-season grass stands don't become too thick for ground-nesting birds, such as quail, or for rabbits and other mammals. Fall burning boosts forb seed production and helps maintain the botanical diversity that is the foundation of a healthy prairie.

Fall burning isn't a good idea in low-density grass stands. Also, you should burn only part of your grassland acreage in a given year so that some cover remains for wildlife throughout the winter. Be aware that fall burns require safe weather conditions and adequate fire lines.

Dove hunt for disabled hunters

A special dove hunt at Ten Mile Pond Conservation Area is being offered to hunters with mobility impairments. The Conservation Department and the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) are sponsoring this special event Sept. 3 at the conservation area in Mississippi County. This is the second day of the dove hunting season, so odds are good the hunting will be excellent.

The Conservation Department will reserve hunting areas for participants' exclusive use. NWTf volunteers will serve as guides, helping hunters get to and from the field and retrieving downed birds.

Participants will need to arrive at Ten Mile Pond CA headquarters at 5:30 a.m. and must leave the fields by 1 p.m. They must have small-game and migratory bird hunting permits and hunter education certification cards. For reservations, call Larry Neal, 573/334-8881, or Tim Hendershott, 573/335-9350.

BUYING DEER PERMITS *early makes sense*

Have you bought your deer hunting permit yet? If not, consider the following facts.

- ▲ Buy early to avoid standing in line. This is the first year that landowner permits will be distributed through permit vendors, so lines will likely be longer than usual.
- ▲ Those who buy by Nov. 5 automatically are entered in a drawing sponsored by the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation for one of two lifetime hunting and fishing permits and framed wildlife art prints.
- ▲ Read up early on changes in deer hunting regulations, including the antler point restrictions in 29 counties, outlined in the 2004 Fall Deer and Turkey Hunting Information booklet.

Surplus property auction

Trucks, farm tractors, a bulldozer, boats, trailers and office equipment will be sold at auction Aug. 14 at Brookfield beginning at 10 a.m.

Auction items will be on display from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Aug. 13 at the Conservation Department's office at 115 Pershing Road, two blocks north of Highway 36 in Brookfield. The items will be on display again at 8 a.m. Aug. 14.

A list of sale items and terms are available at the registration desk the day of the sale. Property must be paid with cash, MasterCard or Visa credit cards or personal checks with proper identification on the day of the sale and before removal. Another auction will take place Oct. 16 in Salem. For complete lists of sale items, call the Conservation Department General Services Division at 573/522- 4115, ext 3279 or 3283.





Missourians walk toward better habitat Oct. 9

Missourians understand the importance of grassland habitat to wildlife and plants, including some endangered species. That's why hundreds of people will gather in North Jefferson City Oct. 9 to participate in the Conservation Department's annual Healthy Habitat Walk/Run.

Race packets will be available starting at 8 a.m. at the Katy Trail pavilion at the junction of Highways 63 and 54. The race starts at 9 a.m. rain or shine. Participants may register for a 10K run, a 5K run or a 5K walk on a separate course.

Proceeds from the event will go to the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation for habitat restoration, research and education projects that benefit endangered animals and plants in Missouri. For more information, visit <www.conservation.state.mo.us/programs/es_walkrun/>.

Emerald beetle no gem for Missouri trees



Missourians should be on the lookout for a beetle that could devastate the state's forests and landscape trees. Timely reporting of its occurrence to forestry officials is critical to protecting Show-Me State resources.

The emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) is a metallic-green beetle. Native to Asia, its larvae injure the inner bark of green ash and white ash trees. It

most commonly reaches new areas in nursery stock or firewood. Infestations have been documented in Michigan, Ohio and Maryland.

Early evidence of emerald ash borer damage includes dead branches in the crown of a tree and the sprouting of many small branches along the tree trunk. Larvae create S-shaped, hollow trails under the bark of infested trees. When the borers emerge, they leave D-shaped holes up to 3/16-inch in diameter. Adults emerge as early as May. Larvae may be present year-round.

For more information about emerald ash borers, call 573/882-9909, ext. 3303, visit <www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/eab/index.html> or e-mail <Robert.Lawrence@mdc.mo.gov> or <Michael.Brown@mda.mo.gov>.

RAMPING UP MISSOURI RIVER ACCESS

The Missouri River has attracted national attention during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, and the Conservation Department anticipates increased interest in river recreation as a result. New river accesses are available for boaters, campers, hunters and anglers, and more are under construction. Those already in service include:

- ▲ Columbia Bottom Access, in northern St. Louis County, with a two-lane, wheelchair-accessible boat ramp, restroom facilities, a 10- by 50-foot wheelchair-accessible fishing pier and bank-fishing opportunities.
- ▲ Stump Island Access at Glasgow, in Howard County, with a two-lane boat ramp and restroom facilities, handicapped-accessible parking and bank-fishing opportunities.
- ▲ LaBenite Park Access, immediately southeast of the Highway 291 bridge at Sugar Creek in Jackson County, with a single-lane boat ramp, restroom facilities, bank-fishing opportunities and handicapped-accessible parking.
- ▲ Riverfront Park Access, in Jackson County just upstream from the Chouteau Bridge on Riverfront Drive, with a two-lane, wheelchair-accessible boat ramp, handicapped-accessible parking, restroom facilities and bank-fishing opportunities.
- ▲ Fort Osage Access in Sibley, just downhill from the Fort Osage Education Center, with a boat ramp, parking lot and bank-fishing opportunities.

Still under construction or in the planning stage are:

- ▲ Pelican Island Access, in northern St. Louis County.
- ▲ Lexington Access, in Lafayette County.
- ▲ Dalton Bottoms Access, northwest of Glasgow in Chariton County.

For more information about Missouri River accesses, check the Conservation Department's online Conservation Atlas at <www.missouriconservation.org/ATLAS/>.





Join backpacking experts for Ozark Trail Trek

You can explore the spectacular landscapes of the Ozark Trail with some of Missouri's most accomplished backpackers Oct. 11-18 during the 15th annual Ozark Trail Trek.

Sponsored by Hosteling International/American Youth Hostels and the Ozark Trail Council, the event joins novices with seasoned veterans. October's cool, sunny days and crisp nights are perfect for enjoying fall colors and the rugged beauty of the Taum Sauk and Karkaghne sections of the Ozark Trail.

The cost for Ozark Trail Council members is \$90 for a half-week or \$175 for a full week. Nonmembers pay \$100 or \$185. The price includes transportation from St. Louis, guides, a T-shirt, an Ozark Trail patch, motel accommodations for full-week hikers and the evening meal Oct. 11. Part of the proceeds goes to Ozark Trail upkeep.

For more information, contact Gateway Council HI/AYA, 7187 Manchester Road, St. Louis, MO 63143, 314/644-4660, info@gatewayhiayh.org.

LEARN MUSKIE FISHING FROM A PRO

Would you like to catch a muskellunge, the big, toothy fish of northern angling legend? If so, the Pomme de Terre Chapter of Muskies, Inc., has a deal for you.

Missouri's cadre of hard-core muskie anglers is sponsoring a Guide for a Day event Sept. 18 to pair veteran anglers with neophytes. It's a chance to fish one of the state's prettiest reservoirs and tangle with the king of freshwater game fish. All they ask is a \$100 donation to Muskies, Inc. The money will benefit muskie management. The price includes a guide for the day, boat, fuel, muskie fishing seminar and dinner.

"Guide for a Day is designed for those who would like to learn about muskie fishing and have a great time in the process," said event chairman Dean Dowdall. "The guides are among the best all-around fishermen in this part of the country. Their expertise will help anyone improve their fishing, not only for muskie, but for all other species as well."

The average keeper muskie caught at Pomme de Terre last year measured 38 inches, prompting Dowdall to call fishing at the southwest Missouri lake "trophy fishing at its best."

For more information, call Dowdall at 417/852-4163 or Carl Marks at 417/745-2381.



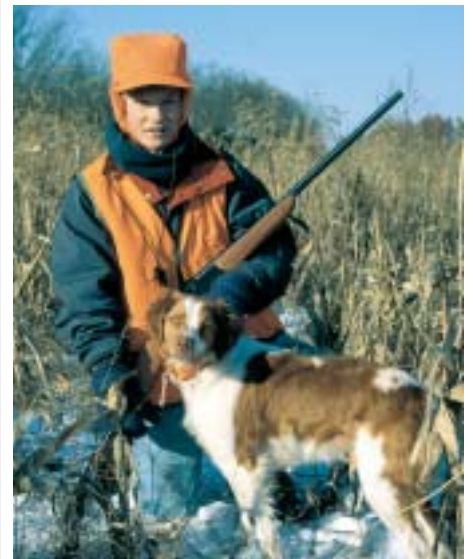
YOUTHS 11 TO 15 invited to hunt pheasants

Hunters 11 to 15 years old can register now for the Youth Pheasant Hunt and Clinic Oct. 2 at Herzog's Hunting Reserve near Holden, Mo.

The day-long event offers participants the chance to learn about hunting, handling hunting dogs and conservation, and to sharpen their wing-shooting skills on clay targets. Safety, ethics, sportsmanship and hunting traditions will be given special emphasis.

Sponsors include the Conservation Department, the Truman Lake, Old Drum, Pettis County and Kansas City chapters of Quail Unlimited and Sharp Brothers Seed.

The registration deadline is Sept. 13. To register or for more information, contact the Conservation Department 2010 S. Second, Clinton, MO 64735, 660/885-6981.



RV show set for Sept. 10-12

Join other recreational vehicle enthusiasts at the 15th annual St. Louis Fall RV Show Sept. 10-12 to see the latest Class A motor homes, travel trailers, fifth-wheel trailers, folding campers, sport trailers, miniature motor homes, conversion vans and van campers.

The event at the Westfield Shoppingtown South County in Oakville is free to all. Hours are 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. Sept. 10 and 11 and 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Sept. 12. For more information, call 314/355-1236 or visit www.stlouisrvshow.com.



Aluminum-only bass tourney set for Sept. 12

If you have an aluminum boat, you can take part in U.S.A. Bass Club #7549's ninth annual aluminum-only buddy bass tournament Sunday, Sept. 12, at Indian Creek Marina on Mark Twain Lake.

For an entry fee of \$85 you can compete for prizes equal to 70 percent of entry fees. The top 10 percent of the field will receive cash prizes. There will be an optional big-bass pot with an entry fee of \$15 and first-, second- and third-place prizes. For rules and regulations, call Jeff Risinger at 314/878-4857 between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., or visit <www.bass.com>.

Lamar resident enters Fishing Hall of Fame

Everyone has dreams, but some follow those dreams and make them come true. That's what Jim Rogers of Lamar did. His dream was fishing.



Johnny Morris, left, with Jim Rogers

Official recognition of Rogers' dream fulfillment came at a ceremony at Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World in Springfield March 18. There, Bass Pro Shops Founder Johnny Morris inducted the veteran angler into the Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame.

The road that led to Rogers' enshrinement began with a boyhood love of fishing. Not content with the fishing lures available to him in 1944, he designed the first of many Rogers originals, the X-9 wooden plug. In the ensuing years, he founded three fishing lure manufacturing companies, including Rogers Lures and Flies, which operated out of his home town of Lamar. During his manufacturing career he helped develop the fishing boat livewell that has allowed tournament fishing to become the thriving industry it is today.

During his 23 years of professional angling, he helped launch the Bass Anglers Sportsmen's Society, taught at the Indiana University Bass Fishing Institute and was one of the first anglers invited to fish and teach in Cuba.

Rogers' partner in both fishing and business has been his wife, Pauline "Babe" Rogers. Together, they worked the professional bass angling circuit, twice winning the title "Mr. and Mrs. World of Sportfishing." In endorsing the 72-year-old angler's nomination to the Hall of Fame, ESPN fishing show host Jerry McKinis said Rogers' contribution to education, tackle development and the fishing industry "has been something for all of us to be proud of."

First Trail Summit set for Oct. 7-9

The first-ever Missouri Trail Summit, Oct. 7-9, is a must-attend event for trail enthusiasts statewide. The event will be headquartered at Columbia's Activity and Recreation Center, but also will have sessions in area parks.

The summit offers trail users and advocacy groups an opportunity to connect with local, state and federal agency planners to discuss issues, share ideas and learn about trails. Sessions will address trail design and construction, signage, ethics, liability, funding, partnerships, volunteerism, accessibility issues and the health benefits of trails.

The event is a cooperative effort of the Missouri departments of Conservation, Natural Resources and Transportation, the Missouri Park and Recreation Association, Ozark Greenways, Inc., Trailnet, the National Park Service, the Mark Twain National Forest, Ozark Trails ATV Club, the Missouri Parks Association, Columbia Parks and Recreation and Cedar Valley Riders Saddle Club. For more information, contact Paula Diller, 2018 William St., Jefferson City, MO 65109, 573/636-3828, <www.mopark.org>.



DUCK INTO WEB FOR WATERFOWL RESERVATIONS

Waterfowl hunters can apply for reservations at Missouri's 16 managed wetland areas 24 hours a day, seven days a week from Sept. 2 through Sept. 19 by calling 800/829-2956 or via the internet at <www.conservation.state.mo.us>.

You can apply for anyone in your immediate household, but the reservation holder must be present at the draw for the reservation to be valid. Results of the drawing will be available at the same phone number and Web site beginning Oct. 1. To make reservations or check results you will need your nine-digit conservation ID number, which is found on the top of your hunting permit or on the back of your Heritage Card, next to the bar code.



Outdoor Calendar

HUNTING	OPEN	CLOSE
Coyotes	5/10/04	3/31/05
Crow	11/1/04	3/3/05
Deer/Turkey, Archery	9/15/04	11/12/04
	11/24/04	1/15/05
Deer, Firearms		
Urban Antlerless Only	10/8/04	10/11/04
Youth	11/6/04	11/7/04
November	11/13/04	11/23/04
Muzzleloader	11/26/04	12/5/04
Antlerless	12/11/04	12/19/04
Groundhog	5/10/04	12/15/04
Squirrels	5/22/04	2/15/05
Rabbits	10/1/04	2/15/05
Turkey, fall firearms	10/11/04	10/24/04
Pheasants		
North Zone	11/1/04	1/15/05
South Zone	12/1/04	12/12/04
Quail	11/1/04	1/15/05
Ruffed Grouse	10/15/04	1/15/05
Doves*	9/1/04	11/9/04
Sora and Virginia Rails*	9/1/04	11/9/04
Common Snipe*	9/1/04	12/16/04
Woodcock*	10/15/04	11/28/04

* Subject to final Federal approval

FISHING

Black Bass (most southern streams)	5/22/04	2/28/05
Trout Parks	3/1/04	10/31/04
Bullfrog & Green Frog	Sunset 6/30/04	Midnight 10/31/04
Nongame Fish Stream Gigging	9/15/04	1/31/05

TRAPPING

Beaver	11/15/04	3/31/05
Furbearers	11/15/04	2/15/05
Otters and Muskrats	11/15/04	varies

See regulations for other zones, limits and dates

For complete information about seasons, limits, methods and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code* and the current summaries of *Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations* and *Missouri Fishing Regulations*, the *Fall Deer and Turkey Hunting Information*, *Waterfowl Hunting Digest* and the *Migratory Bird Digest*. To find this information on our Web site go to <http://www.missouriconservation.org/regs/>.

The Conservation Department's computerized point-of-sale system allows you to purchase or replace your permits through local vendors or by phone. The toll-free number is 800/392-4115. Allow 10 days for delivery of telephone purchases. To purchase permits online go to <http://www.wildlifelicense.com/mo/>.

AGENT NOTEBOOK

People I talk to in my

job as agent and during hunter education classes that I teach often bring up their "right" to hunt.

I usually tell them that hunting in Missouri is a privilege, not a right. It shouldn't be confused with the basic rights granted to us in our Constitution, such as the right to "keep and bear arms." People usually aren't aware that the privilege of hunting can be suspended or revoked through the court system, or by the Conservation Commission.

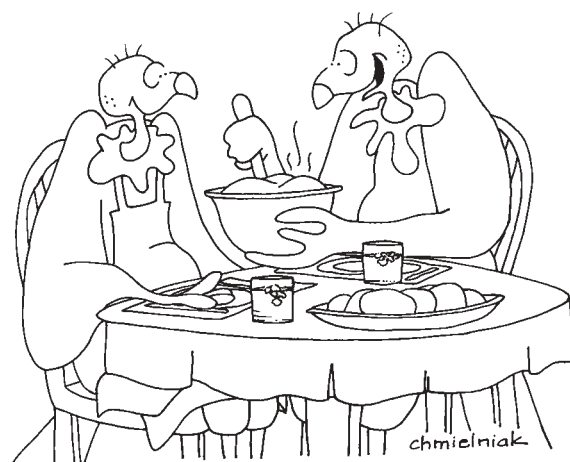
The Conservation Commission has the authority to withhold hunting, fishing and/or trapping privileges for several reasons.

If a person has been delinquent in child support payments, privileges can be suspended until the situation is remedied.

If a person is involved in a hunting incident in which they injure someone through careless or reckless behavior while afield, their privilege to hunt can be revoked for a period of time.

If a person is convicted of wildlife violations deemed significant by the Commission or an accumulation of violations, their privileges may be revoked. Because of agreements with other states, the commission also revokes hunting privileges of nonresidents convicted of serious wildlife violations in other jurisdictions.

Remember that a privilege abused might end up as a privilege removed. To ensure our hunting privileges, we should strive to abide by the rules and regulations that guide our activities, make every effort to make handle firearms safely and make prudent decisions when hunting and angling. — Kelly Knowles



"It's a treat to come back to a home-cooked meal after eating all week on the road."



Program Schedule

Television the way Nature intended!

Broadcast Stations

Cape Girardeau UPN "The Beat" WQTV / Saturdays 8:30 a.m.

Columbia KOMU (Ch 8 NBC) / Sundays 11:00 a.m.

Hannibal KHQA (Ch 7 CBS) / Weekends, check local listing for times

Kansas City KCPT (Ch 19 PBS) / Sundays 7:00 a.m.

Kirksville KTVO (Ch 3 ABC) / Saturdays 5:00 a.m.

St. Joseph KQTV (Ch 2 ABC) / Weekends, check local listings for times

St. Louis KSDK (Ch 5 NBC) / Sundays, 4:30 a.m.

Warrensburg KMOS (Ch 6 PBS) / Sundays 6:30 p.m.

Cable Stations

Branson Vacation Channel / Fri., Sat. 8:00 p.m.

Brentwood Brentwood City TV / Daily, check local listing for times

Cape Girardeau Charter Cable Ed. Ch. 23 / Thursdays 6:00 p.m.

Chillicothe Time Warner Cable Channel 6 / Wednesdays 7:00 p.m.

Hillsboro JCTV / Mondays 12 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Independence City 7 / Thurs. 2 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. & Sundays 8 p.m.

Joplin KGCS / Sundays 6 p.m.

Mexico Mex-TV / Fridays 6:30 p.m. & Saturdays 6:30 p.m.

Noel TTV / Fridays 4:30 p.m.

O'Fallon City of O'Fallon Cable / Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.

Parkville City of Parkville / First and third Tuesdays of the month 6:30 p.m.

Perryville PVTV / Mondays 6 p.m.

Raymore Govt. Access-Channel 7 / Various, check local listings for times

Raytown City of Raytown Cable / Wed. 10:00 a.m. & Saturdays 8:00 p.m.

St. Charles City of St. Charles-Ch 20 / Tues. 5:00 p.m. and Wed. 10:00 a.m.

St. Louis Charter Communications / Saturdays 10:30 a.m.

St. Louis City TV 10 / Mondays 11:30 a.m., Wednesdays 3:30 p.m.

St. Louis Cooperating School Districts / Wednesdays 9 a.m.

St. Louis DHTV-21 / Mondays 10:30 a.m.

St. Louis KPTN-LP/TV58 / Thursdays 10:00 a.m.

St. Peters City of St. Peters Cable / Various, check local listings for times

Ste. Genevieve Public TV / Fridays 1 p.m., 6 p.m. & 12 midnight

Springfield KBLE36 / Nine times a week, check local listing for times

Sullivan Fidelity Cable-Channel 6 / Wed. 11:00 a.m. and Fri. 7:00 p.m.

Union TRC-TV7 / Tuesdays 3:00 p.m.

West Plains OCTV / Mondays 6:30 p.m.

Meet our Contributors



Jason Dickey worked as a protection agent in Dallas County from 1996 until recently, when he was promoted to Southwest Region Protection District Supervisor for the Bolivar District. He enjoys hunting, fishing, archery, reloading, camping and canoeing. He and his wife, Teresa, live in the Bolivar area with their two children, Ryan and Reagan.

Mark Goodwin teaches biology at Jackson Senior High School. He has broad interests in the outdoors, but fishing and hunting top the list. Mark believes that squirrels, properly prepared, offer some of the finest eating of all game animals.



John A. Johnson lives in Sikeston with his wife, Myrna. He works in Charleston for Hurley and Associates, where he assists agricultural producers in marketing their crops and products. He tries to spend as much time as possible actively pursuing all outdoor activities. He says "It's great to live in a state that puts so much emphasis on wildlife and nature."

Robert Vaughn grew up on a farm in west-central Missouri and has lived in Adrian since 1968. After retiring from his work in the heavy construction industry in 2000, he now has more time to fish, boat and camp, as well write articles that share with others his personal experiences.



Bill White is a private land programs supervisor in Jefferson City and works with the USDA on Farm Bill conservation programs. He's worked for the Conservation Department for 16 years. He says he enjoys his work because it gives him the potential to positively impact the state's natural resources. His hobbies include quail hunting, camping and keeping up with 4 sons.



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Ruby-throated Hummingbird

A favorite of Missourians, ruby-throated hummingbirds typically live in rich bottomland forests. However, a proliferation of flower gardens and hummingbird feeders have drawn these birds into open areas, such as yards and parks, where we can easily observe them. — *Jim Rathert*